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Contact:

Tom Gilroy, 703 741-5804
Allison Cobb, 202 387-3500
David Roe, 510 658-8008

INDUSTRY COMMITS TO SCREEN 2,000 HIGH-VOLUME CHEMICALS FOR HAZARDS; RESULTS DIRECT TO PUBLIC

Unprecedented Program Yields "Giant First Step" In Cooperative Effort

Washington, D.C. (February 3) -- More than 400 companies have signed up to provide accelerated hazard screening for over 2,000 top-selling chemicals that they manufacture, the Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA) and Environmental Defense announced jointly today.

The companies are responding to a unique challenge program, designed to secure preliminary hazard-testing data for the public on the approximately 2,800 highest-volume industrial chemicals in the U.S. economy. The cooperative program, established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), sets a 2004 deadline for completing first-level screening of all U.S. high-production-volume chemicals (those made or imported in amounts of more than 1,000,000 lbs. per year).

"These commitments represent a giant first step," said Fred Krupp, Executive Director of Environmental Defense, who invited chemical company CEOs to come forward voluntarily with test results after his group's 1997 study showed large gaps in the public's knowledge about thousands of chemicals. "The public's right to know about the chemicals around us is getting a significant boost from the companies that make those chemicals. As this becomes the norm rather than the exception, we will look back and wonder how it could ever have been the other way around." He noted that the program must be measured by actual results, which Environmental Defense will monitor.

"This is the largest voluntary chemical health and safety program ever, and working together made it possible," said Fred Webber, President of CMA. "We have a common goal of protecting public health." CMA and Environmental Defense are sponsoring newspaper advertisements [see below], noting the industry's commitments. "Knowledge and disclosure are key elements of safety, and these efforts will produce knowledge much faster than merely following the requirements of law," Webber added.

"EPA is extremely pleased with such an unprecedented commitment to providing the public with basic health and environmental information on the chemicals used most often in this country. The success of this innovative, voluntary program is a wonderful example of what can be accomplished when EPA, industry, and the environmental community work cooperatively toward a common goal," said Susan Wayland, Deputy

Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances.

Vice-President Al Gore and U.S. EPA Administrator Carol Browner, along with CMA and Environmental Defense, announced the HPV Chemical Challenge Program in October 1998. Companies then had until December 1999 to commit chemicals voluntarily for hazard-screening, with a mandatory EPA testing process as backup for chemicals not volunteered.

CMA is the leading voice of the U.S. chemical industry. CMA represents its members on public policy issues, coordinates the industry's research and testing programs, and sponsors the industry's environmental, health, safety and performance improvement initiative, known as Responsible Care ®.

Environmental Defense, a leading national nonprofit organization based in New York, represents more than 300,000 members. Since 1967, we have linked science, economics, and law to create innovative, equitable, and cost-effective solutions to the most urgent environmental problems.

NOTE: to view the joint advertisement, see
www.environmentaldefense.org/ads/cma.html
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